

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AID-05 PC-01 IO-10 MMO-01 DHA-02 ORM-01 SIL-01 LAB-04

HEW-02 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 SCCT-01 /099 W

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R 261549Z AUG 75 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1008

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3726

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: PARTIES REJECT MELGAR'S WARNING

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 3501, 3542, 3649

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE POLITICAL PARTIES ISSUED A DECLARATION REJECTING THE WARNING OF CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR THAT PARTY DEMONSTRATIONS WERE FORBIDDEN BY THE DECEMBER 4, 1972 DECREE. THE DECLARATION STATED THAT THE PARTIES WOULD CONTINUE WITH THEIR PROJECTED MEETINGS AND PLACED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY INCIDENTS THAT MIGHT ARISE ON THE ARMED FORCES. THE HONDURAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ALSO CONDEMNED MELGAR'S STATEMENT AND SAID THAT IT WOULD SEND PROTESTS TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS OF THE OAS AND CPESUN. THE POSSIBILITY OF A CONFRONTATION IN THE COMING DAYS APPEARS LIKELY IF BOTH SIDES ADHERE TO THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR WARNED THE POLITICAL PARTIES ON AUGUST 19 THAT PROJECTED PARTY DEMONSTRATIONS WERE PROHIBITED UNDER THE TERMS
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OF THE DECEMBER 4, 1972 DECREE. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEES OF THE

LIBERAL AND NATIONALIST PARTIES MET TO CONSIDER THE SITUATION AND SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED A DECLARATION. THE MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

- (A) THE PROHIBITION LACKS JURIDICAL VALIDITY AND IS AN ATTACK ON HUMAN RIGHTS;
- (B) THE ACTIVITY OF THE PARTIES IS CIVIC IN NATURE AND IS DESIGNED TO REESTABLISH A CONSTITUTIONAL REGIME
- (C) THE PARTIES WILL CONTINUE THEIR ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY;
- (D) THE PARTIES DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF DIALOGUE SO THAT ALL SECTORS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY CAN COOPERATE IN FURTHERING THE NATIONAL INTEREST;
- (E) THE PARTIES BELIEVE THEY ARE ACTING WITHIN THE LAW AND WITH A HIGH CONCEPT OF PATRIOTISM. THEREFORE, THEY HOLD THE ARMED FORCES RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ARBITRARY ATTACK ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF HONDURAN CITIZENS; AND
- (F) THEY DO NOT SEEK A CONFRONTATION, BUT DO SEEK TO BRING ABOUT A LAWFUL GOVERNMENT.

2. THE HONDURAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ISSUED A DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF THE PARTIES. IT CONDEMNED THE COMMENTS OF MELGAR ON THE BASIS THAT THE DECEMBER 4, 1972 DECREE ONLY REFERS TO THE SUSPENSION OF THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL AND NOT TO PARTIES. IT EMPHASIZED THAT THE ASSOCIATION WILL PROTEST TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS OF THE OAS AND THE UN ABOUT THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN HONDURAS.

3. RICARDO ZUNIGA AUGUSTINUS, LEADER OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY, STATED IN PRESS INTERVIEWS THAT THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE WAS GUARANTEED BY THE CONSTITUTION. HE SAID THE TWO TRADITIONAL PARTIES WERE UNITED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING ABOUT A RETURN TO FREE ELECTIONS. HE SAID THAT THE PARTIES HAVE THE RIGHT TO HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS AND THAT A GOVERNMENT ATTEMPT TO PROHIBIT SUCH MEETINGS WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

4. COMMENT. POLOFF TALKED TO MINGOV FLORES GUERRA AND PARTY LEADERS ABOUT PRESENT SITUATION. THE NATIONALISTS SAY THAT THEY INTEND TO HOLD A DEMONSTRATION IN CHOLUTECA ON AUGUST 31 OR, IF THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE, ON SEPTEMBER 7. THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT THEY SHOULD CONFRONT THE GOVERNMENT AT THIS TIME BECAUSE

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OF WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS ITS RELATIVE INSTABILITY. IN THEIR VIEW SUCH A SITUATION PRESENTS THEM WITH A GOOD CHANCE OF ACHIEVING THEIR GOAL OF FREE ELECTIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT IT CANNOT ALLOW THE DEMONSTRATION TO TAKE PLACE BECAUSE IT WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS AN INVITATION TO EXERT MORE PRESSURE BY THE OPPOSITION. THEREFORE, THEY INTEND TO IMPEDE OR SUPPRESS THE PROJECTED MEETINGS. MINGOV FLORES TOLD POLOFF AND HE AND A NUMBER OF OTHER OFFICERS ARE IN FAVOR OF FREE

ELECTIONS BUT THAT THE COUNTRY IS NOT YET READY FOR THEM
BECAUSE OF THE MULTITUDE OF INTERNAL PROBLEMS. THE EMBASSY
BELIEVES THAT A CONFRONTATION IN THE COMING DAYS BETWEEN THE
PARTIES AND THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS LIKELY IF THEY CONTINUE
TO ADHERE TO THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS.
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